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THE

REGAL ADVENT,

AND THE

RESURRECTION, OF THE PAST.

A SERMON;

The Sixth of a series on these subjects,

By **Rev. THOMAS RATTRAY.**

“For yet a very little while, and he that is coming shall come, and shall not tarry.”—HEB. X. 37.—*Alford's version.*

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to sound, the mystery of God is finished, as he declared the glad tidings to his servants the prophets.”—REV. X. 7.—*Alford's version.*

“And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdom over the world is become our Lord's and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.”—REV. XI. 15.—*Alford's version.*

“And the nations were angry, and thine anger came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give their reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them which destroy the earth.”—REV. XI. 18.—*Alford's version.*

TORONTO:

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P R E F A C E .

The presentation of a discourse the sixth of a series, may require explanation. The reader will observe on the 9th page a slight notice of the contents of the five preceding. I had hoped to have finished the whole series with the one now given, but found the review of Scripture, on the regal advent, and the resurrection, incomplete, on finishing that one, and as needing the compass of one or two more discourses, to embrace the whole testimony of Scripture, so far as I may be able to discover it, and also to furnish space for suitable reflections and inferences.

In publishing the one now given, I have somewhat yielded to the advice of friends, and have been also guided by my own convictions. The subject of the regal advent as accomplished in A. D. 70, is not a novelty. The learned Grotius of the seventeenth century, and some others of note in that and subsequent times advocated it. In the last century there were men of eminence who admitted the force of Scripture as on its side, and in this century there are learned and pious men who say and write a little in its favour, yet are seemingly deterred from an open advocacy by the almost universal belief in it as to be at the end of time.

But the doctrine most prominent in the discourse now presented, viz., that shortly after the first or priestly advent of Christ, for the accomplishment of a work of atonement and propitiation, before the then living generation passed away, the salvation wrought out by the Son of God was consummated on all the faithful dead of former times. That this was done at the beginning of the kingdom of God—the final age of the world. That this final kingdom began its course when that of Moses vanished, and with all the faithful dead of previous times raised up and glorified as its nucleus, to which is added *continuously*, the faithful in all future times to the end, is a novelty so far as formularized doctrine is concerned. At least it is so, so far as I can discover.

If any person can refer to any book which contains it, I will rejoice in the fact, and in the removal of my ignorance. To the present I can only say, I have found the substance of the doctrine in Scripture, and there not merely as an inference essential to the doctrine of the regal advent as of A. D. 70, but stated by itself, and as synchronous with the judgment, and the regal advent.

But why disturb the prevalent faith at this late day? Why face the accepted Eschatology with a doctrine apparently subversive of it? For several reasons, the first of which might be sufficient as an apology, viz., the authority and harmony of Scripture; Secondly, to be better able to come to a true knowledge of "the dispensation of the fulness of times," in its king as reigning, and in its nature as "the ministration of the Spirit and of life." Lesser reasons may be furnished, as the simplifying of the conditions of salvation and communion, now in Christendom various, and all beyond those revealed in the New Testament. Also the action of the doctrine here advocated, as conducive to a belief in Christianity as spiritual and supernatural, and to faith as the eye of the mind to discern the supernatural.

The reader will please remember, that the evidences from Scripture for the doctrines here advocated are far from being fully presented in this discourse. They are spread over the series, of which this discourse is the sixth. This one is now given to the Christian people, because it presents in *some degree* an epitome of the evidence from Scripture in the others; because dealing chiefly with the writings of St. Paul, the chief writer of the Apostles, and the one most imbued with the spirit of Messianic prophecy, and the spirit of the Lord of the prophets, it has a larger field of enquiry on the leading subjects relating to the kingdom of God, and I may add because of the wish of friends for a critical examination of the apostacy mentioned in 2nd Thess. ii. chapter, and the account given in 1st Thess. iv. chap. 13th to the end, of the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the translation of the living.

This discourse is now presented to suggest to the Christian people a course similar to that followed by the people at Berea in

apostolic times. It is said "they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." In times such as the present, there is a loud call to retire from human expositions of the Word, however ancient and influential, and to rest on Holy Scripture—on it as the basis of all truth concerning the kingdom of God. There is a pressing need in these times of unrest and upheaval, when deep is calling unto deep, and the Christian mind is disturbed and uneasy concerning the doctrines of the last times, to seek calmly and persistently the mind of the Holy Spirit, thereby to know him who is over all God blessed for ever, and the true nature of the final age over which he is now reigning in all the fulness of the God-head.

The righteousness in Christendom does not much exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. The one family of God is now scattered abroad. Lo here ! and lo there ! salute our ears. Our divisions come from imperfect conceptions of truth concerning the kingdom of God. They are wholly opposed to the letter and spirit of Scripture. The King reigning over the final age may suggest the need of unity. The final age comprehending all the righteous of former dispensations, and all those "caught up" in the past times of the final age, and ready to receive us if we are faithful unto death—receive us then, take us up then to the vision and company of the glorified Son, and the innumerable host of the redeemed, may, and I think would, quicken the universal church into the life and zeal of first times, and make the gospel much more effectual in the salvation of the impenitent.

In this hope I now present this discourse to the notice of the Christian people of all sects and parties, with diffidence concerning the human element in it, but with a firm confidence, that it may be, there are in it gleams of light, giving assurance of a better acquaintance with the things of the kingdom of God.

THE REGAL ADVENT, AND THE RESURRECTION, OF THE PAST.

THE SIXTH OF A SERIES OF DISCOURSES ON THESE SUBJECTS.

John's Gospel XVI. 22.—"And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

2nd Thessolonians II. 1.—"Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him."

Ephesians I. 9. 10.—"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."

The discourses of our Lord to his disciples before his passion, recorded in John's Gospel, 14th to 18th chapters, reveal the innermost heart of Jesus. In the 16th chapter he alludes frequently to a brief interval of absence, during which they should weep and lament, to be followed by his return, and a reversal of their sufferings and sorrows. He was to leave them for a brief season, "because I go to the Father." His passion on earth needed for a basis of redemption, his entrance as the Christian High Priest into the presence of the Father. He was to die, for it was appointed to the sin bearer once to die, and after that a crisis in his case unto salvation. But as his symbolical predecessors typically died once a year, and entered into the earthly holy place with their oblations, and there waited before the mercy seat for a crisis which intimated either the divine acceptance, or rejection, of their offerings; so he who fulfilled all righteousness, and perfectly completed his sacrificial work, was to ascend to his Father, to submit to him his atoning offering, to obtain in the approval of

the Father eternal redemption for us, to be invested with all power in heaven and on earth, to remain in heaven "until the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets from ancient times;" and then come forth as the day star from on high, to shed forth the light and heat of life on the region and shadow of death of former ages, and irradiate with the light of life, "the dispensation of the fulness of times" onward to the end of time. In view of all this, Jesus said to his disciples "ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." In view of this Paul said "now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." To the Ephesian Church he said, "having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him."

In the first discourse of this series, I proposed a fresh and careful survey of Scripture to see if the prevalent views of the second advent, the resurrection and the judgment, are there sustained, and to ascertain whether the difficulties which encumber the accepted Eschatology, and which are felt by many as seriously affecting the harmony of Scripture, are not inherent in Scripture, but have arisen from a false method of interpretation. Having previously, by an inductive method, drawn from Scripture an Eschatology which placed its subjects at the end of the Mosaic age, and not as generally understood at the end of time; I was led, in this series of discourses, to present the evidences for a conclusion, so different from what has been, and is now, held in Christendom.

I presented my conclusions in the first discourse, viz., that shortly after the first or priestly advent of Christ, for the accomplishment of a work of atonement and propitiation, before the then living generation passed away, the salvation wrought out by the Son of God was consummated on all the faithful dead of the past times—on all the pious of the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages,

and on the righteous dead outside the limits of the countries of the covenant people. That this was at the beginning of the kingdom of God—the final age of the world, over which the glorified Son of God began his reign, which will continue to the end of time. That the final kingdom began its course when that of Moses vanished, and with all the faithful of previous times raised up and glorified as its nucleus, to which is added continuously, the faithful of all future times to the end.

In the first and second discourses, I gave the evidence from the prophecies in the Old Testament. In the third, I showed the bearing they had on the general tenor of the New Testament—on all in it referring to the kingdom of God; and then made a minute examination of what is revealed in the vestibule of the New Testament, and of some of the prophecies of Christ. In the fourth, I dwelt chiefly on the series of prophecies of Christ in Matt. 24th, Mark, 13th, and Luke 17th and 21st chapters. In the fifth, I presented an analysis of Matt. 25th, 31st to the end, together with notices of the parables of the virgins and the talents, and that memorable reply of Jesus to the High Priest, “Within a little while ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” In what I have done, I have not overlooked any apparently hostile passage of Scripture, nor so far as I know, have I placed any undue stress on particular words, nor exalted verbiage above the meaning, which, from the context and the spirit of the passage was manifested. As regards prophetic symbolism, I have been guided by a canon of interpretation which has been strangely overlooked, which demands an interpretation of the same words or figures in one of two ways, as the subject is referrible either to what is to transpire in the material or in the supernatural realm. I will illustrate the action of this rule by Luke 21st chap., 31st verse, where is a prophecy of what would take place and be visible and palpable; and also of what would happen, which in its spiritual and supernatural nature, could only be known by the spiritual mind. It is said of the one, “when ye see these things come to pass,” and of the other, “know ye that the kingdom of God is at hand.” The one, referring to the desolation of Jerusalem, demands the literal understanding of the word “see,” in the sense

of a visual bodily perception. The other, must have from the nature of its subject, the knowledge which comes from faith, or from a belief of the words of Christ. Not that the reason of difference is to be had from the use here made of the verbs "see" and "know," but solely from the different subjects predicted, the one taking place in the sphere of the material, and the other in the sphere of the supernatural. The verb "see" is frequently used in Scripture in prophecies of the supernatural. It is used as a figure. It is prophetic symbolism. As indicating the chief sense of the body, it is to be understood as teaching mental and spiritual perception. To "see God," whom no man has ever seen with his bodily eye sight, means to believe in God, and to enjoy what faith may realize; to "see death" is to experience death; to "see life" is to possess and enjoy life; to "see the kingdom of God" is to be assured of its existence and action, and to be possessed of its blessings; to "see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and glory," is to be persuaded that he has so come, and to live and act under this impression.

There can be no belief in a religion having reference to a future life, without a recognition of the two spheres of the material and the spiritual or supernatural. Further, there cannot be an intelligible interpretation of the symbolism of prophecy, without an acceptance of the rule before mentioned, for the sufficient reason that Biblical prophecy refers to events to happen in both spheres, and the symbolism used is taken from what exists in the earthly sphere. To interpret the symbols literally in all cases, were to remove all differences which we know exist in spheres so widely, if not radically diverse. We separate matter and mind. If anyone doubts the propriety of so doing, yet he will not if he believes in a future life, doubt of the necessity of separating time and eternity, the present and the future life, at least so far as limiting the action of the senses on the one, and confining any knowledge of the other to the action of faith. On this ground I contend that prophetic symbolism, in its interpretation must be governed by the subjects predicted, and that it is the wildest fanaticism to interpret the figures of prophecy which have reference to the spiritual and the supernatural, literally. So doing, post-millennarians have placed the subjects of Eschatology at the end of time, and pre-millennar-

ians place them in the future, or until the predicted supernatural events are manifested in the sphere of the material, there to be cognizant to the eyes of the body !

What has been the result from this, but a virtual ignoring of the evident sense of Messianic prophecy ; of its spirit in the words of him whose testimony is the spirit of prophecy, of the statements of the Apostles, and of what perhaps is the chiefest of all, the spirit of Messianic prophecy in the whole of Scripture which covers its surface, and permeates all its substance. Another result, before Infidels, who have on the ground of the prevalent Eschatology and the teaching of Scripture, and especially the prophecies of Christ, maintained that the latter were false if the former were true, we have been obliged to take the position of special pleaders and sophistical reasoners, and lame ones at that. A further result, the harmony of Scripture has been broken to save an ancient and generally accepted Eschatology. The old theological maxim, " what was always, and everywhere, and by all accepted," has been by Protestants made a ruler of the sense of Scripture—a maxim which, if it had been recognized by Luther as valid, might, and no doubt would, have closed his efforts to reform, or remove doctrines very ancient and very generally received. He fell back on Scripture. The theological maxim paled before the Christ-maxim, " search the Scriptures," and we had the Reformation. If a second reformation is needed, it can only be had by the same recourse to Scripture as the fountain-head of knowledge. It may be painful in our way through the past eighteen centuries, to the writings of the men who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, to lay aside the veneration for human expositions which has prostrated the Christian world at the feet of fallible men. It is inconceivably painful to traverse the creeds of nearly all post-apostolic times. There is relief, however, in the review of what the Lutheran reformation did in setting aside doctrines, the germs at least of which appeared late in the second century, and in considering the divided state of Christendom. In doctrinal corruptions and church divisions, there is before us a state of things so wholly adverse to the normal principles of the kingdom of God, and in the present advanced and enlightened age, so abhorrent to the Christian heart, as to

call forth efforts at reformation, without regard to the long past, either as respects time honored doctrines, or ecclesiastical systems.

In placing the subjects of a scriptural Eschatology at the end of the Mosaic age, and at the beginning of the kingdom of God, I am aware that I am advancing a method of Biblical exegesis which strikes at the root of the prevalent theologies, and demands their reconstruction. I am aware that the theology presented in this discourse is hostile to the received sense of Scripture in nearly universal Christendom, and will have to meet an united and fierce opposition or cold contempt. A cumulative mass of evidence however from Scripture supports it, gathered from Messianic prophecy uttered in the dusky dispensation of Judaism, by those who sitting in the valley and shadow of death, shed gleams of light, by their foresight of the expected Life-giver, on all the spiritual minds around them. To this light in a dark place there is added the increased light which, on the threshold of New Testament revelation, beams forth in the inspired songs of Zacharias, Mary and Simeon, and in the messages of the Baptist, forecasting the greater light shed forth by the priestly servant of Jehovah, when he came to be the fulfiller of the law and the prophets, and by his suffering and atoning work, lay the basis of the future, yet near, kingdom of God. We have gone over his prophetic words, we have seen their accordance with previous prophecy, we have observed his prophetic words as the concentration of all previous Messianic prophecy, centered in their fulfilment on the passing away of Judaism, at the desolation of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple—the sign when before the then living generation lapsed, “all these things shall be fulfilled.” We have in the words of the Lord of the prophets the testimony of Jesus, which is “the spirit of prophecy.” We might here rest our case, for in the words of Him who said “one is your teacher even Christ,” there is the perfect demonstration. Here we might rest and calmly face an united Christendom and all her theologies, and say the words of Christ are more than all. With Him we can face the world of mankind ; with Him on our side we can dismiss all our fears of discomfiture, and all our painful feelings of regret at the undoing of the theological labours of many centuries, and say, “let God be true, and every man a liar.” Let Christ and the

Word ever be the centre to which the seeker of truth may ever go. The highest court of appeal—the final judge in all controversies, whose decisions over-ride and annul all church symbols, and all the expositions of noted theological leaders, as they fail to find acceptance with Him, in whom dwelleth all the substantial fulness of the God-head, and as they fail to harmonize with his word which is the law of his reign.

But let us proceed to notice the testimony of the Apostles concerning the kingdom of God, and as we do so, let us place in front of their sayings the text from John's gospel, xvi. chapter, 22nd verse, which gives an epitome of the prophecies of Christ: "And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." We have here a prediction of the sorrows of the interval, when the disciples would be engaged heralding the good news of the kingdom, and of a wonderful transformation, when "I shall see you again"—a transformation so great, that sorrow shall flee away, "and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." When was this to be? We read in the next verse, "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it you." "In that day," a phrase expressive of the day of full redemption. Malichi speaks of "that day when I make up my jewels." Jesus said to his sorrowing disciples before his passion, "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, *until that day* when I drink it new *with you* in my Father's kingdom." He said also, John xiv. chapter, 18th to 21st verses, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me, because I live, ye shall live also. *At that day* ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." That "at that day," the reference is to a time of full redemption, is evident from the 26th and 27th verses of the xvi. chapter, where we read "At that day ye shall ask in my name, and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you." Here the glorified state is revealed, in which the redeemed draw near to the Father, and in the perfect sense see and enjoy God. In 1st Thess., v. 4, "that day" as "the day of the Lord"

is mentioned. In 2nd. Thess. i. 10, we read, "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, because our testimony among you was believed in (or concerning) that day. In 2nd Timothy, i. 12, we read, "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against *that day*." Paul prays for Onesiphorus, "The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day;" and for himself when about to suffer martyrdom for the name and cause of Christ, he looks calmly forward *to that day*, the day of Christ's regal advent, for the crown of righteousness, and for the accomplishment of the words of his Lord, "ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

That the words of Christ leavened the thoughts and words of the Apostles admits of no doubt. He told them of an interval in which they would be as orphans, that condition alleviated by the presence and gifts of the Holy Spirit the comforter. That they interpreted the interval as enduring to the end of time, or that they understood the coming of Christ, as to be at death, and the life then to be received as affecting only a part of their being, the other part remaining in death until a resurrection at the last day of time, cannot be supposed. The words of Christ, "Because I live, ye shall live also," followed by, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you," bear on their face the promise of an early and a full redemption. The notion of a salvation of a part at death, and of the remaining part after an interval of thousands of years, so long, and until now, the prevalent faith in Christendom, is not discoverable in Scripture. "At that day" they would live as Christ lives, is the only fair inference from his words. "At that day" they would know of their perfect union with Christ—an union as perfect as that of Christ with the Father. "That day," as the day of the bright appearing of the Son, was to them, and to all the faithful of the past ages, the day of full redemption.

It was "the end of the days" to Daniel. "The last day" of

which Jesus said "I will raise him (the believer) up," and "that day," at which Paul expected to receive the crown of righteousness, all comprehended in the words of Jesus, "because I live ye shall live also," "I will come unto you." At that day, raised and fully redeemed and glorified as sons of God, "ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." "In your orphan state ye have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Life indefeasible and indestructible. Life encircled by the omnipotence of Father and Son. A full redemption of the whole man. A full beatification of the whole man. A fulfilment of the words of Jesus on which in the interval of orphanage the disciples leaned. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hands. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Can we wonder that Paul in A. D. 52, or when he wrote the epistle, the date of which is uncertain, said to the impatient believers at Thessalonica, "Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is come." *ἐνέσθκειν* not "is at hand," but "is come." He tells of an intervening apostacy. Of a wicked or lawless one to be revealed in a brief time, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of his coming." A son of perdition—a mystery of iniquity already at work, but hindered by the power of imperial Rome, yet shortly in the intestine commotions in the Roman Empire soon to happen, to have a short space in which to display his true nature, and to precipitate a war with Rome, which would initiate the crisis of the world, and in the final downfall of the Mosaic dispensation, at the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, give the outward and visible sign of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, the establishment of the kingdom of God, and "our gathering together with Christ."

There was a view of the second coming of Christ then held by

some at Thessalonica, no doubt very like to that of some at Corinth, who said "there is no resurrection of the dead," and to that of Hymenæus and Philetus and others, of whom Paul says in his second epistle to Timothy, "who concerning the truth have erred, saying, that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some." The coming of the Son of Man, and the resurrection of the dead to such, were completed in conversion and regeneration. "Risen with Christ" to them was the whole of the faith concerning "that day, and our gathering together unto him." "Christ in you the hope of glory," "Christ is in you except ye be reprobates," fulfilled as they thought the coming, the ἐπιφάνεια the bright appearance of the Son of Man in the glory of the Father. They confounded the means with the end. The earnest with the future harvest. The germ with the perfect plant. The promise with the fruition. Paul well said of such, "they overthrow the faith of some." He saw in this view the overthrow of the central doctrine of the Christian faith threatened, and like John, regarding those who denied that Christ had come in the flesh, he unsparingly denounced those who interpreted the words of Christ by conversion and regeneration, and so doing diverted attention from the outward and visible sign of his coming : the desolation of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, and the final end of the Levitical dispensation—all comprehended in the visible sign of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, the establishment of the kingdom of God, "and our gathering together with him." Paul well understood from the prophetic words of Christ, that his coming would be signified by overwhelming judgment on Jerusalem and the temple, and by the end of the Levitical rites ; and that to look for the regal advent before the special sign given by Christ, was tantamount to a rejection of his predictions. Hence he spoke of the intervening apostacy, and the rise of a lawless power adverse to the Divine purpose, already in its incipency, yet hindered, and for a season so to be, then to be manifest, and to perish at the regal advent.

That the words of Paul had no reference to an apostacy and lawless power thousands of years afterwards is evident, in that he speaks of the "mystery of iniquity" already at work, and of its destruction at the regal advent, which he calls "the brightness of

his coming"—2nd Thess. ii. 8. If that was to be at the end of time, why did the Apostle endeavour to correct a false impression concerning it as of the past, by a reference to an apostacy already at work? Was that apostacy to smoulder for thousands of years? As we read in the 6th and 7th verses, "And now ye know what hindereth, that he (or it) may be revealed in his (or its) own time. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work, only until he that hindereth be taken out of the way."—*Alford's version*. Paul appeals to those he addressed, thus, "ye know what hindereth." He alludes to the death of him who hindered in the closing words "until he be taken out of the way." He says, "and then shall the lawless one be revealed whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Those whom Paul addressed were aware concerning what hindered. How could that have been if the power hindering were not at that time existent? and whose hindering power nothing but death could remove. "Taken out of the way" evidently points to the death of the Roman Emperor Nero. What is said before refers to him as the hindering power, and to be so as long as he lived. The facts of history at that time which are recorded by Josephus show, that while Nero lived, the fear of him and of his power was great in all the Provinces. What this historian presents, perfectly deciphers whatever of mystery there is in the Apostle's words about the lawless one, or the mystery of iniquity, or the hinderer, or what happened immediately after he was "taken out of the way." After Nero's death in A. D. 68, intestine commotions convulsed the Roman Empire. As Christ had predicted, "ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars, see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." He had before said, "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." To this prediction John refers in his 1st epistle ii. chapter, 18th verse, "Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know it is the last time." The judgment on Jerusalem was, according to the words of Christ, to be immediately preceded by general commotions in the Roman Empire. He said "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines, and pestil-

ences, and earthquakes in divers places." He adds, "All these are the beginning of sorrows."

I have before assumed A. D. 52 as the date of 2nd Thessalonians, as to that time general consent is given. To what I have said of Nero as the hindering power to the manifestation of the lawless one, exception may be taken on the ground that Nero only became Emperor in A. D. 55, and if the epistle was written in A. D. 52 there is a manifest anachronism in the case here presented. There is, if the epistle was written in A. D. 52, in the reign of Claudius Cæsar. I do not know, and no one else does, that this date is correct. Apart from the internal evidence, and from what we learn of the journeyings of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, there is nothing to determine the date. If any one prefers the Emperor Claudius to Nero, that the commonly accepted date of the epistle may be sustained, let him do so. For myself, I think a later date, probably A. D. 58 or 60, more consonant with the internal evidence. I rest greatly on the words "until he be taken out of the way," as referrible to Nero, and as determining the later date of the epistle. There is a harshness in the words which has its justification in their application to Nero, the greatest monster of cruelty of all the Roman Emperors; and the words authenticate the general desire for his death, which existed for several years before it happened. Nero was the first Emperor that enacted penal laws against the Christians. In his reign Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom, and John was banished to Patmos. But his cruelty was not confined to any religious sect or Province. His savage heart left its impression on the whole Empire, and everywhere the hope rested on the anticipated time, when he should "be taken out of the way." During his reign, the lawless one, or power, had its rise, and limited action, but the general tranquility of the Empire hindered its growth, and compelled the delay of the intended out-break, until the troublous times which preceded and followed the death of Nero. It was then that the Jewish war began, which in three years and a half, ended with the capture of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and the scattering of the holy people, foretold in Daniel xii. 7, and more plainly by Christ, in his prophecies recorded in Matthew xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xvii. and xxi. These events

together, gave the outward and visible sign of the regal advent, and proclaimed to the world the Son of God as King of the final age. Then was the brightness of his coming, signalized outwardly by the judgments he executed, and assured to the eye of faith as the season of "our gathering together unto him,"—"the fulness of times," in which all things were gathered together in Christ, "both which are in heaven and in earth, even in him."

In many places in the two epistles to the Thessalonians, the Apostle uses language concerning the regal advent which implies its nearness, and any interpretation of it as referring to the end of time, or to a lapse of eighteen or more centuries, is forced and unnatural. In 1st Thess. i. 3, we read, "Your patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." More correctly it reads, "And the patience of your hope of our Lord Jesus Christ." The hope in his appearing patiently exercised. In the 9th and 10th verses we read, "How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." *Τον ῥυομενον ημας απο της οργης της ερχομενης*, literally, "who delivereth us from the coming wrath"—"the impending wrath" of Matthew iii. 7. In chapter ii. 12, we read, "That ye would walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." Let this verse be collated with the last of the preceding chapter, "And to wait for his Son from heaven," and with what Christ said, Luke xxi. 31, "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand," and we can understand how its sense would be regarded by those to whom it was addressed. In the 19th and 20th verses we read, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." Here the Apostle anticipates a gathering of the saints at the regal advent, and himself, and the fruit of his labours at Thessalonica. No allusion to death as the door into glory, but the advent of the glorified Son, as the season of full redemption. The same thought in iii. 13, "To the end, he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints." In chapter iv. 15, we read, not "they," but "we which are alive, and remain

unto the coming of the Lord." The nearness of the regal advent, is forcibly set forth in chapter v. 2, "For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." In the predictions of Christ there are many exhortations to watchfulness and caution, concerning that day; its sudden approach likened to the act of a thief, and to a snare which would entrap the unthinking. Peter says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." The glorified one said to the Church in Sardis, "I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Why these cautions? and why the knowledge of the brethren at Thessalonica concerning the uncertainty of the time, and its unlooked for approach, if the subject in its manifestation was in the far distant future thousands of years onward? And why no allusion to death as the real object, which would come as a thief in the night, and for which we should watch? And why does the Apostle at the end of this epistle say, "I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Why does Christ and Paul so dwell on the regal coming, and their cautions, and prayers centre on it, as the crisis of destiny to those they addressed? There is but one answer. The regal advent was near.

The language of the Apostle in 1st Thessalonians, iv. 17, seemingly represents the end of terrestrial things. The Apostle had said, "And the dead in Christ shall rise first," and adds, "Then," ἔπειτα "afterwards, sooner or later." The sense as immediate, or soon afterwards, or a long time afterwards, shows the flexible use of ἔπειτα which in its ordinary sense means a sequence earlier or later, as the spirit of the context demands. The word occurs sixteen times in the New Testament. In some representative of a very brief interval. In others of an interval of many years. In James iv. 14 of a lifetime, and in 1st Corin. xv. 23rd and 46th verses, it represents in the first, an interval according to the theory here advocated of forty years, and according to the prevalent theory thousands of years, even to the end of time. According to the pre-millennial theory, eighteen or more centuries. In the second, it signifies the interval from the creation of Adam to the resurrection. What indication is reasonably to be found in the

use of *ἔπειτα* 1st Thess. iv. 17? Does the Apostle mean that no lapse of time separates between the rising of the dead in Christ, and the translating of all the righteous then living without their tasting death? If so, he must in this passage either teach, that the end of time and all earthly concerns were at hand, or that the resurrection of the just would be at the end of time, thousands of years from his day, and that the translation of all the righteous would then happen. This view is held in Christendom generally. Yet it is held, with the vast body of evidence attesting to the nearness of the second advent, and the resurrection in Apostolic times. It is held as the sense of one part of Scripture, against which is arrayed Messianic prophecy, the predictions of Christ, the teaching of Apostles, and the general spirit of Scripture. If the average of testimony is to decide, or if the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy, is the supreme standard, this passage of Scripture may be regarded mysterious or insoluble, but its apparent teaching should yield to that of the others. In general the first word in verse 17, "then," is understood by readers as linking the events predicted in that verse, with those in the one preceding, and as teaching that at the resurrection of the dead, all living believers in the whole earth, will be at once without passing through death, changed into the glorified condition. The inevitable inference being, that the resurrection of the dead marks the bounds of time. It is alleged that this passage of Scripture proves that the resurrection is at the close of time; but such an assumption involves what strikes a fatal blow at the inspiration of Paul, and of a message which he introduces with words implying plenary inspiration, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord," and again, that "we the living," not they who shall be alive at the end of time. In the 15th verse we read, "We which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (or precede) them which are asleep." And in the 17th verse, "We which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." To say that Paul speaks not of some he was addressing, but of believers who might be alive at the end of time, and that he uses the present tense instead of the future by way of emphasis could be admitted, were it not for the mass of evidence from Scripture which points to the judgment on Jerusalem,

and the end of the Levitical dispensation as the season of the second advent and the resurrection. In the light from Scripture concerning the time of these events, we can readily perceive the propriety of the Apostle's words, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," and seek their solution in some other way, than by denying their inspiration, or referring them to the end of time, or according to the pre-millenarian view, to a distant future.

The prevalent view of the resurrection of the dead in Christ, which refers the event to the end of time, or to a period far in the future, confounds the true sense in verses 15 and 17. To understand it, we should place ourselves as near as possible to the bereaved believers who were sorrowing over the departed "as others which have no hope." We can only perceive the force of Paul's exhortation in verse 13, by supposing the existence of a belief at Thessalonica in the regal advent as near, and in its blessings as to rest on the living to a far greater extent, than on the dead. We need not think that there was no faith in the resurrection of the dead, although the words in the 13th verse, where the Apostle tells the bereaved not to sorrow for the departed "even as others which have no hope," either intimate this, or refer to an inferior place in the coming kingdom for those who had died before its appearance. There may have been in the mind, the carnal Jewish view of the kingdom of the Messiah, that which prompted one to say, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," and which led the sons of Zebedee to crave the chief places there; or perhaps the words of Christ placing John the Baptist above all the prophets; and those, "Nevertheless he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he," suggested the inference, that a lower place in the kingdom would be given to all those who had lived and died in the inferior dispensations. We can readily see, that to live until the regal advent, it then being so near, apart from all the considerations now mentioned, would be the desire of every one, while in the belief of them the desire would be greatly intensified. We can also see, that to die just before the grand crisis then impending, would, even with the belief of a joyful resurrection, be regarded as a calamity. We should not lose sight of the human element even in the child of God, or suppose that the faith of the

gospel wholly removes it. We can place ourselves in the midst of recent adventist excitements, and easily perceive the predominance of the human element—the eagerness then shown, to live to the coming of the great King, to hail his advent, and without tasting death enter into the joy of our Lord. Many of us can look back to such times, and from our own experience, more or less, testify to the human element as shrinking from death, and we longing to be caught up into glory, without experiencing the cold touch of the King of terrors. Such seasons, and such exercises of the mind, enable us to understand the case at Thessalonica, and the solution of any mystery resting on it. They also prepare us to understand the words of Paul in verses 13 to the end of the chapter, and to see that his words point not to an advent and resurrection at the end of time, but to these events as near at hand, and connected with a dispensation of life, the abolition of *Hades*, and the rendering death ineffectual to hold the subject of the kingdom of God, so that “we which are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who are asleep,” for “the dead in Christ shall rise first,” and all who through the long course of the final age are partakers of Christ, will at death be caught up to meet the Lord in the air—caught up as were the dead in Christ—caught up together with them, not at the same time, but successively, as life’s work is done. We the living, viz., those whom Paul addressed, after, it may be only a brief interval; and the rest of the faithful successively, as the course of the final age runs on, and as their work in the earthly service of the Lord is accomplished. This I consider the only sense of this confessedly difficult part of Scripture, that is consonant with Messianic prophecy, the predictions of the Lord of the prophets, and the general tenor and spirit of Scripture. Another part of Scripture, 1st Corin. xv. 51, has points of resemblance. “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” It is to be regretted the principal MSS. here differ greatly. One reads, A.2, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall not all be changed.” S. A*. read, “We shall all sleep, but we shall not all be changed.” The *Vulgate* reads, “We shall all indeed rise, but we all shall be changed.” There is such confusion here, that from this passage which seemingly from the reading of the A. V. resembles the other, there is nothing to be had elucidatory of it. To read 1st Thess.

iv. 13 to the end, in the belief of the regal advent as near, and it as introducing a reign of life, gives to me the only satisfactory exegesis. It presents the resurrection of the dead, in or by Christ, as at its commencement. More, it shows that "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," and all the faithful from then to the end of time, are not, as were the faithful before, to remain under the power of death until the life-giver came, but when their work of service here is done, are at death caught up to meet the Lord, and with all the dead in Christ raised up at his coming, shall together with them be ever "with the Lord." The difference between the former dispensation, called in Scripture "the ministration of death," and the final age, called "the ministration of the Spirit" and of life, gives the key to unlock this difficult passage, revealing its real sense, and its harmony with all else in Scripture.

An error of very serious account which has prevailed in Christendom from very early times to the present, in regarding the Christian dispensation as like the previous ones, under the reign of death, and all the faithful not fully redeemed until the end of time, has led to a sad misunderstanding of the sense of Scripture, and especially of the New Testament, in regard to the kingdom of God. I have written this series of discourses, chiefly with reference to the unveiling of the testimonies of Scripture concerning the time of the resurrection, as giving the test question, by which the life-nature of the final age may be perceived. Gross ignorance concerning it has prevailed, and to it is traceable various evils in the ecclesiastical, the doctrinal, and the ritual, which have beclouded the Messianic day, hindered the manifestation of the righteousness which exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, and divided and scattered the people of God. After the review of Scripture, so far as I have proceeded in these discourses, the previous conviction in my own mind is deepened, that the time of the resurrection, is the great point to be settled, in order to the correction of the serious error now stated—an error which has sealed up the truth of Scripture concerning the kingdom of God, and has reduced Christianity nearly to the level of the previous and inferior dispensations. So doing, it has blighted Christianity; it has lessened its power to save; it has incorpor-

ated Judaism with it ; it has presented it in earthly ecclesiasticisms, in Jewish ritualism, and in doctrinal corruptions. It has removed its reigning king, its pure Word as alone the law of his reign, and the assemblies of the faithful as alone his Church on earth ; substituting human expositions of Scripture, and churches resting on foundations created and placed at the will of man. It has dimmed the light of the Messianic day.

As we close the review of 1st Thessalonians, both the letter and the spirit of its last chapter declare the near approach of the day of the Lord—the day of his regal advent. The day of the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the Messianic day of eternal life are in the tenth verse, in its closing words, “live together with him,” impressively presented. The resurrection of the faithful dead of the inferior dispensations, at the advent of the King, the Life-giver, was introductory to a reign of life to the end of time. We in this final age, under the personal reign of Him who is “the life,” may trust in his precious words, “He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” Death, to the faithful in the former dispensations meant more than the end of earthly life. It included seclusion in *Sheol* or *Hades* until the resurrection at the regal advent of the Messiah. Death, to the faithful in the reign of the life-giving Son of God is simply the end of earthly life. There is now no *Sheol* or *Hades*. Death is now ineffectual to hold him who is in Christ. To him there is no resurrection in the sense that that word applied to the faithful in former ages. There is translation : there is the being “caught up” to meet the Lord, and the risen dead in Christ, and those before caught up, and so we shall be with them for ever “with the Lord.”

It is not possible to read the first eleven verses of the fifth chapter, and not be convinced, that they as immediately following those in the preceding chapter, teach the nearness in Apostolic times, of the regal advent, the resurrection of the faithful dead of the past, and the introduction of a reign of life, to continue to the end of time. Paul speaks of events so near, as to demand the same degree of watchfulness, as we would deem needful, if we were aware of thieves about to break into our households. He speaks not of death, as that to be an object of dread, and watch-

fulness. In the tenth verse, he uses words which do not mean life or death. Γρηγορῶμεν and Καθευδῶμεν. The former occurs in the 6th verse, and is rendered "watch." It, in the 10th verse in the A. V. is rendered "wake." The *Vulgate* gives the true sense *vigilemus*. The other is not the word in verse 13, iv. chapter, and there rendered "sleep," as meaning death. It signifies either natural sleep, or moral inaction. The Apostle in speaking of those "not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us," indicates, that whether we are watchful or drowsy, which, as all are not alike faithful to duty, might be the condition of many at the regal advent, nevertheless "we should live together with him." The Apostle is speaking not of the condition of Christians as it should be, but as it is; and is intimating that much will be forgiven, if amidst a degree of unfaithfulness, the heart is still beating for Christ, and his appearing. But he presents to all, whether watchful or not, a motive having reference to the day of the Lord as so near, that they should be watching unto prayer, and not be as the Gentiles around them, children of the night in which men sleep. He exhorts Christians, as if many of them were inclined to slumber, even when the Bridegroom was near. He says, "Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." He says, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day." He adds, "Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation."

Neither death, nor the end of time, is once presented as the motive to watchfulness. "The day of the Lord," "The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him," furnished to the apostle the grand motive, and it he enforced by the plainest intimations of their nearness to those then living. He appealed to their consciousness, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." He wrote to them concerning that which had been the burthen of his ministry among them, and in which they had been fully indoctrinated. His inspired messages centred on the glorified Christ, and on what he would do when he came in his glory. As the Master had said, so also said the servant of Jesus Christ. In the enthusiasm he felt in view of the near advent of glory, he uttered

words disparaging of fleshly man, and even of Christ in his fleshly condition, in 2nd Corin. v, 16, knowing that he soon would be in the presence of the glorified Son and the glorified company of the faithful of past times. Not that he thereby slighted the work done by Christ when in the flesh—the atoning and propitiating sacrifice of his death, for it he regarded as the sole basis on which the kingdom of God would rest, and that which would give validity to all the acts of its King. The sufferings preceding the glories, he ever regarded as the foundation of hope, and the cause of eternal redemption to himself and others. But he saw the difference in the suffering Christ in the flesh, and the reigning and triumphant Christ, as he observed the propitiation effected to put away sin, and the regal action of the King of the final age efficient in its consummation. The means completed, his eyes were ever fixed on the end designed, in “our gathering together unto him,” and on the perfection of the divine purpose, “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him,” thus making the kingdom of Christ the life of all the faithful of the past, and life to all the faithful to the end of time.

In his other Epistles, Paul uses the same high motive. In Romans xiii. 11, 12, we read, “And that knowing the time, that *now* it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” In xvi. 20th verse, he says with reference to that day, “The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” In 1st Corin. i. 7, we read, “So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In iv. 5, he says, “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come;” Chapter vi. 2, he says, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” In chap. vii. 29, he says, with reference to the great event which filled his mind, “The time is short,” and at the end of the Epistle he says, “If any man love not the Lord, let him be anathema, the Lord cometh.”—*Alford's version*. In Phill. i. 6, the good work begun by the Spirit in the believer is in the A. V. regarding its comple-

tion feebly expressed. He "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Rather read, "He will perfect it up to the day of Jesus Christ." The verb *ἑπιτελεσει* signifies not a course up to the perfect standard, but the consummation of the work—At the day of Jesus Christ—"In the day of the Lord," which then was so near, and the "day and hour" so uncertain, that for its appearance they were ever to be watching. In the 9th and 10th verses, Paul prays for the increase of love and knowledge in view of "that day," "that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ." This, the duty of the believer by the ever present power of the Holy Spirit. The other, the work of God the Son, who in the day of his coming would crown the whole with the seal of perfection.

Can we wonder that Paul should say, Phil. i. 23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better." Not unclothed to be with Christ, but "clothed upon with the house that is from heaven." He had no faith in the vagaries of heathen poets, who peopled their Elysium and Tartarus with impalpable phantoms. He longed to be with Christ, but at "that day," and clothed with the spiritual body. He speaks not of death. He strangely uses a remarkable verb rendered in the A. V. "to depart," if by it he *simply and only* signified death. He uses the infinitive form with the article and the preposition *εἰς τὸ ἀναλυσαι*, which with what precedes, may be rendered, having a strong desire for the return. What return? The answer may be found in Luke xii. 36, where the same verb *ἀναλυσαι* is found, and where we read, "And ye yourselves, like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will *return* from the wedding." The kingdom of God is the subject of the context. Jesus had said, "Fear not little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." He exhorts them to lay up treasure for it—to have their hearts set on it—"for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." He was going to his Father with the trophies of his mediatorial work, as the price of his marriage to the church. He was to "return" from the wedding. He exhorts to a watchful waiting for his return, saying, "Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Not without reference to these words of Christ did Paul say, "having a strong desire for the return." He uses a Greek verb which is only in the New Testament, found in Luke xii. 36, and Phil. i. 23. Once he uses the noun, in 2nd Tim. iv. 6, and this is the only instance of this word in the New Testament. Did he *simply and only* mean death? Of it he frequently speaks, but never clothing his thoughts concerning it with such a verb. Why does he do so in Phil. i. 23, if not to show that he meant it to comprehend and forcibly point to the return of the glorified one, at the advent as the King of the final age. Mark the words that follow, "And to be with Christ which is far better." Consider their harmony with the closing words in the 17th verse of the 4th chap. of 1st Thessalonians—those which end his predictions concerning the resurrection—those which give the consummation of the resurrection, in our gathering together with Christ; "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." These words define when we would be with Christ. Other words of his, such as those in Coll. iii. 4, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, *then* shall ye also appear with him in glory," sustain a truth, which pre-eminently appears in the New Testament, and which is not in the slightest degree diminished by his words in 2nd Corin. v. 8, "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," for these words are to be interpreted in the sense of the 1st and 4th verses, which present the "house not made with hands eternal in the heavens," and "that mortality might be swallowed up of life," expressions only referrible to the resurrection.

The prevalent view of Phil. i. 23 is untenable. The true sense of it has been overlooked, because determined by the references before, and after, to life and death. The 23rd verse introduces a subject, which not then, nor until the regal advent, would have *an immediate relation* to the death of the believer. Paul uses words, as $\tau\eta\nu\ \epsilon\pi\iota\theta\upsilon\mu\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\nu\ \epsilon\iota\chi\omega$, "having an intense desire," which are not applicable to death, and are only consonant with the return of his Lord in regal glory, and "our gathering together unto him." Death before the regal advent involved an interval of silence in *Hades*. Peter at Pentecost said of Christ, "His soul was not left in *Hades*." Not left there, because it is further said, "this

Jesus hath God raised up." Even Christ after his resurrection, which to him was not perfected until after his ascension, said to Mary, "I am not yet ascended to my Father." To the bereaved brethren at Thessalonica, Paul says nothing of death as the door to the vision and company of Christ. He comforts them solely by the nearness of the regal advent, and the resurrection. He himself about to die, points to the crown of righteousness to be received "at that day"—the day of "his appearing." In the 20th verse, with reference to his evangelistic labours, he says, "Now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." This was the holocaust or whole burnt offering under the law. This in Christianity is the continual testimony for Christ in life—in all the activities of life, and in the passive endurance of bonds, and imprisonment, and death, for the cause of Christ. Can we wonder at Paul's following words, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Are they not wholly consonant with other words of his, "Living or dying we are the Lord's," and to those in the 20th verse, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

The Apostle, with all the spiritually minded of his day, desired to live to the day of Christ. They had ever "the intense desire for the return," and "being with Christ." It was to them a veritable enthusiasm, and not a mad fanaticism. It was as Coleridge has it, "A true Christian enthusiasm, the vivifying influences of the altar, the censer, and the sacrifice," and I may add, the completion of these in the regal advent of Him, at whose kingly presence, the altar, and the censer, and the sacrifice—the divine agencies of worship and mediation in the night season of Judaism, as the stars in the firmament pale and vanish before the rising sun, so these lesser lights would fade from the vision before the Sun of righteousness which was about to arise, "with healing in his wings." Enthusiasm is a strong word. Paul was said to be beside himself. His excuse was, "It is for God, it is for your cause." He said, "If any one is in Christ a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." He had no faith in the Jewish notion of a visible regal advent, and earth as furnishing the capital of the kingdom, or the throne, or the court, or the paraphernalia of an earthly royalty. He remembered the

words of his Lord, "The world seeth me no more." He believed in the spiritual nature of the regal advent, and the resurrection. The symbols used concerning them, he interpreted in a spiritual manner. His inspiration in things spiritual and supernatural, had its limits with him, as with John, who could only say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but *we know* that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." He expected no visible signs of the supernatural as regarded the regal advent, or the resurrection. His faith rebukes our Jewish notions of the latter in the sounding trumpet, the opening graves, and the rising of re-organized fleshly bodies. Paul, by inspiration of the Spirit, spake of a resurrection of the dead. He said the dead (*οι νεκροι*) in Christ shall rise first."—1st Thess. iv. 16. Will any one learned in Greek say, that *οι νεκροι* here, *must* mean the bodies of the dead? Or that in 1st Corin. xv. 35, where we read, "But some will say, how are the dead (*οι νεκροι*) raised up? and with what body do they come?" that *οι νεκροι* *can* mean *there* the bodies of the dead?

The celebrated John Locke on this passage in his controversy with the Bishop of Worcester says, "He who reads with attention this discourse of St. Paul, where he discourses of the resurrection, will see, that he plainly distinguishes between the dead that shall be raised and the bodies of the dead. For it is *νεκροι παντες οι* are the nominative cases to *εγειρονται ζωοποιηθησονται ελεβθησονται* all along, and not *σω ματ* bodies; which one may with reason think would somewhere or other have been expressed, if all this had been said, to propose it as an article of faith, that the very same bodies should be raised. The same manner of speaking the Spirit of God observes all through the New Testament, where it is said, "raise the dead," "quicken or make alive the dead," "the resurrection of the dead." In another place Mr. Locke says, "Another evidence that St. Paul makes a distinction between the dead, and the bodies of the dead, so that the dead cannot be taken in this 1st Corin. xv., to stand precisely for the bodies of the dead, are these words of the Apostle, "But some man will say, how are the dead raised, and with what body do they come? Which words, dead, and they, if supposed to stand precisely for the bodies of the dead, the question will run thus.

How are the dead bodies raised? and with what bodies do the dead bodies come? which seems to have no very agreeable sense." In another place he says, "In the New Testament, I find our Saviour and the Apostles, to preach the resurrection of the dead, and the resurrection from the dead, in many places, but I do not remember any place, where the resurrection of the same body is so much as mentioned. Nay, which is very remarkable in the case, I do not remember in any place of the New Testament, (where the general resurrection at the last day is spoken of) any such expression as the resurrection of the body, much less of the same body."

I may state here, that about twenty years ago, while actively engaged in the ministry, that in a critical examination of 1st Corin. xv, 35, in the Greek, I was led to decline belief in the resurrection of the body, and especially when I found such a phrase is not discoverable in Scripture, and when I found in that passage a decisive test of the true sense of *οἱ νεκροί* and *τῶν νεκρῶν* in other places in Scripture, defining it of persons, and not of the bodies of the persons. My change of mind then, led me to a closer investigation of Scripture concerning the doctrines of the last times, which was shortly after interrupted for several years, by a failure of health from nervous prostration. When again restored to a fair measure of strength, the flaw in the orthodox faith on a doctrine so generally held as the resurrection of the body, suggested doubts concerning other parts of Eschatology. But some years elapsed, which were merely seasons of patient investigation. Six years ago I became convinced, that the visions of John at Patmos were prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; and that his banishment to Patmos took place in the reign of Nero. Before, I had been impressed by the prophecies of Christ, and by the many references in the Epistles, to an advent of the glorified Son as soon to happen. The more I searched the Scriptures did I see a mass of evidence, antagonistic to the prevailing belief concerning the second advent as to be at the end of time, or at a yet distant future. Scanning the Messianic predictions in the Old Testament, and observing them as chiefly centering on the reigning Messiah, so as to present apparently only one advent, and that of a reigning king. Entering the vestibule

of the New Testament, and there in the songs of Zecharias, and Mary and Simeon, observing the same almost exclusive reference to one advent, and that strongly corroborated by the work and the ministry of the Baptist, there was furnished a presumption, that the two advents, that of the suffering and atoning Christ, and that of his reigning glory, might be reasonably viewed in the prophetic mind as in a sense one, because only separated by a brief interval of time, and that interval filled up by the heralding of the gospel of the kingdom, and irradiated by the presence and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Having thus realized a presumption favourable to the regal advent as soon to succeed the priestly advent, I was led to a minute examination of Scripture old and new, and the more I searched, so the more I was amazed at the cumulative mass of evidence in the Old Testament, and still more in the New, on the side of a speedy regal advent. It appeared simply overwhelming, and stultifying to the prevailing views at the present time, whether to that called post-millennial, or that styled pre-millennial. How to account for the age, and prestige, and influence of the former theory, when placed before the testimony of Scripture, became both difficult and perplexing. In it the regal advent is at the end of time, and also the resurrection, and the judgment. It is beyond question that Scripture considers the three events as synchronous, but it places them at the end of the Mosaic age, and at the beginning of the final age. It regards the beginning of the final age as the winding up of the interests of all past times—the passing away of the old heavens and earth, and the introduction of new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. It shows a marked and radical distinction in the old and in the new. Death reigning in the one, and holding the faithful dead in its cold embrace until the advent of the delivering Messiah. Life reigning in the other, and death *in it only affecting the natural life*. In the former, the resurrection, and the judgment, simultaneous at the bright appearance of the great God our Saviour. *In the latter*, death ineffectual to hold the believer. *At death*, he is caught up to meet the Lord, and the glorified host of the redeemed. No unfinished issues in the perfect reign of the final age, as were in the other. The judgment

ever acting and ever deciding. *We* are always manifested before the judgment seat of Christ.

A false view of the resurrection as that of the body—"the resurrection of the flesh," as it was called in some of the personal creeds of the third century, has fixed the mind of Christendom on the regal advent as in the future, or at the end of time. More, it has prevented a right understanding of the *final age as a dispensation of life*. When the body of the Mosaic dispensation perished in A. D. 70, its spirit entered the final age, and has found nutriment and shelter in the cherished doctrine of the resurrection of the body. It has permeated what is called Christian Eschatology. It has brought Christianity as represented in the creeds of Churchianity, down to its own level.

There is no reigning king. He is in the far country waiting "to receive a kingdom and to return." His mediatorial work is yet unfinished. He is still the pleading intercessor. The Father is even now Judge. He has not yet "committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father." The reign of the Son as Judge is limited to the last day of time. Till then all the events of all times accumulate, and not until then is the day of full redemption. All this Judaized Christianity had its origin and its prevalence largely from the notion begotten in early Christian times, of the resurrection of the dead as the resurrection of the bodies of the dead. The spiritual resurrection of Scripture has not furnished ocular demonstration, and *therefore* it is yet future. The loud-sounding trumpet has not been heard. The opened graves have not been seen. The spiritual and the supernatural have not made their events felt in the sphere of the material, and therefore most sage conclusion, 'the resurrection predicted in Scripture is not yet, and the kingdom of God is not come. It was predicted by Christ to come at the conclusion of the age, and it is confidently affirmed that his words signify the end of time, which is not once named in Scripture as the period of the resurrection, or of the regal advent, or of the establishment of the kingdom of God.

I have referred to the belief in the resurrection as that of the body, as the occasion of the ancient and yet prevalent Escha-

tology, which places the regal advent, the resurrection and the judgment at the end of time. Another cause may be named, in a very human tendency to interpret the symbolism in prophecy, referring to the supernatural and extra-mundane, literally. Yet another cause, in the mistranslation of certain Greek words in the authorized version, as $\alpha\iota\omega\varsigma$ rendered world instead of age, and $\mu\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omega$ rendered by the indefinite words shall, will, etc., instead of words denoting what is not far off or about to be, which is the general, if not the uniform meaning of the verb $\mu\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omega$ in the 110 instances in which it is found in the Greek New Testament. The importance of a right translation of this word, especially where it is used in connection with the kingdom of God, cannot be overstated.

I will give a few instances where the true sense is obscured by the rendering in the authorized version. Luke xxi. 36, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall (*that are about to*) come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Acts xxiv. 15, "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be (*that there is about to be*) a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Acts xvii. 30, 31, "And the times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge (*he is about to judge*) the world in righteousness." Romans viii. 18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall (*the glory about to*) be revealed in us." First Timothy, iv. 8, "Having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," read, *of that about to come*. Chapter vi. 19, "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come (*against that about to come*) that they may lay hold on eternal life." Second Timothy, iv. 1, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge (*who is about to judge*) the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom." Rev. xii. 5, "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule (*who was about to rule*) all nations with a rod of iron." Heb. i, 14, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be (*who are about to be*) heirs of salvation."

Heb. vi. 5, "The powers of the world to come," read, "*the powers of the approaching age.*" Rarely is $\mu\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omega$ correctly rendered in the A. V. One instance may be given in Heb. viii. 5, "As Moses was admonished of God, when *he was about to* make the tabernacle," but not one can I find where the word has relation to the kingdom of God. These instances where $\mu\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omega$ appears in connection with the resurrection, the judgment, and the glory then about to be revealed, which in 1st Peter i. 5, is called, a "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," give more than a hint concerning the nearness of "the last time," and rebuke any attempt to make the prophecies of Christ in Matt. xxiv, Mark xiii, and Luke xvii. and xxi. chapters accord with the accepted Eschatology.

Many may say, "who can believe in the resurrection as eighteen centuries in the past. Such a view demands an entire riddance of our theological preconceptions, and of our ways in literalizing Scripture symbolism, and thereby 'waiting for his Son from heaven,' as the first disciples were exhorted to do. It shows an amazing difference in the *post mortem* condition of saints before and after the regal advent. To those before, a continuance in death, followed by a resurrection to everlasting life, when the Life-giver came in his glory; while to those in the reign of Christ, death is the door to glory and the vision of Christ." Not however should be added, any ascription to death of any power to save, or to translate the believer to the vision of Christ, for death although abolished, or rather as the verb $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\tau\alpha\iota$ in 1st Corinthians xv. 26, means "made ineffectual," is still the remnant of the last enemy. To the Christian, death is now as much swallowed up in victory, as it was to all the faithful of former times, at their resurrection at the regal advent. As the faithful now enter the valley of death, they prove that only its shadow is there. Its power to hold—its former power which held the faithful in iron bondage until the advent of the delivering King, is gone, and gone for ever. There is an amazing difference in the *post mortem* condition of saints before, and after the regal advent. The latter have the $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ (spirit) the special gift of the final age, called by Paul "the spirit of adoption," or rather "of sonship," "the earnest of our inheritance," that "by

which ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." This gift is peculiar to the final age. It was bestowed as the earnest or first fruits when Jesus ascended to the Father. The interval from the ascension to the regal advent, was distinguished by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and amongst them of that which made the believer immortal as a Son of God, verifying the words of Christ, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

For the comfort of all who may be startled by the view of the resurrection here given, and may be inclined promptly to reject it, on the ground that it is a novelty, so far as the Church universal is concerned, and therefore unworthy of notice, however well supported by an array of texts of Scripture, and by an interpretation of certain words, which place the regal advent, and therefore the resurrection, at the beginning of the Christian age, when that of Moses vanished; let me say, that *the substance* of the doctrine of the resurrection here advocated, has been, and is now held by the Church universal. In the lack of space to give verbatim the various Church creeds on the *post mortem* condition of the faithful, suffice to say, that they all in substance teach, that the souls of believers at death, do immediately pass into glory, and that they are with Christ. That which is called the resurrection according to these creeds, is not the revival of the personality, but of the animal or natural body, or as many call it, "the same body"—the very same thing, which St. Paul says cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Concerning it, he emphatically says, "neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

In truth, the creeds of the Church universal, are in a state of hopeless confusion on the sublime and fundamental doctrine of the resurrection. It will not avail for any of the doctors of the churches, to look scornfully at the view here given, utter a sharp interjection, and contemptuously reject it, without careful examination and a fresh review of Scripture. It will be said by all who are ready to search the Scriptures daily, to see "whether those things are so," "physician thyself." The multitude of sects with their differing symbols on many important doctrines, and with their comparatively harmonious dogma on the doctrine of the resurrection; in what they disagree upon, suggest to the thoughtful mind serious doubts,

concerning that upon which they nearly agree. And their deliverances on the *post mortem* condition of the faithful, that the souls of believers at death pass into glory, and are at once, and forever with Christ, will so long as these deliverances are held, convey to the mind, which looks beneath the verbiage to the substance, the very doctrine here advocated, concerning the faithful in the reign of Christ ; and will also suggest a full, and not a partial redemption, and the substitution in the creeds, of the word "person" instead of "soul." Scripture announces "the day (not days) of redemption," and gives no hint of the consummation as fulfilled, first, on the soul immediately after death, and then on the body at the last day of time.

The celebrated William Tyndale, the contemporary of Luther, and noted as having made the first English version of the Bible, (that by Wickliffe one hundred and fifty years earlier of course excepted), was the most learned Biblical scholar of his day. He was well aware of the confusion in the received creed of his day, concerning the resurrection. For the truth he led a suffering life, and that unto death, for he perished at the stake. In his controversy with the learned, and in many respects estimable Sir Thomas More, a bigoted, yet no doubt conscientious Roman Catholic, he said, "and ye in putting them (souls) in heaven, hell, and purgatory, destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection. * * * If the souls be in heaven, tell me why they be not in as good case as the angels be ? And then what cause is there of the resurrection ?"

If Tyndale were here now, he would say to the members of the Protestant Churches, "and ye in putting them (souls) in heaven, destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection. If the souls be in heaven, tell me, why they be not in as good case as the angels be ? And then what cause is there of the resurrection?" What answer would be given, but that the resurrection is that of the body, at the end of time. If Tyndale were then to ask, "what of the souls of believers at death passing immediately into glory, and being at once and forever with the Lord ? Is this also a resurrection?" They would say, no, it is a translation, it is the being caught up to meet the Lord. In short, the inevitable

answer, putting "personality" in the case for "soul," is the equivalent of the view of the *post mortem* condition of the faithful *in the reign of the son of God*, which I have given.

The celebrated Calvin, without doubt the most learned theologian of his day, in his rather violent philippic at the soul sleepers, whom he calls Psychotomists, defines the first resurrection, as that of the sanctified soul presently after the death of the body, and the second resurrection as that of the body; and yet withal against the Anabaptists, he writes confusedly, and perhaps indicates an opinion, that the departed saints are not in the glorified state. In fact, the Reformers were confused on the intermediate state so called, and the resurrection; else why Luther's note on Eccles. ix. 10, where we read, "Another proof that the dead are insensible. Solomon thinks therefore that the dead are altogether asleep, and think of nothing. They lie, not reckoning days or years, but when awakened, will seem to themselves to have slept scarcely a moment."

With many who read this discourse, the greatest objection to the reception of the doctrines of the second advent, the resurrection and the judgment, here given, will be, that they traverse the deliverances of the universal Church of nearly all times. But this is not so, if we consider not the words, but the substance of these deliverances. In a sense, the Church universal has always held the reign of Christ. "The mediatorial reign" is a phrase frequently used in creeds, and commentaries, and sermons. In all the books of psalmody, there are many hymns on the reign of Christ as now. The venerated Dr. Watts in his poetical version of the 96th psalm, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her King," gives expression to thoughts which imply a present reigning King, and a present and continuous judgment of all men in all Christian times. The Church universal has always in a sense held the substance of what I now advocate concerning the reign of Christ; *but it has held less, and more, than Scripture teaches*. It has held less, in that it has not recognized the regal advent as dating from the end of the Mosaic dispensation, and in regarding the reign as mediatorial and not sovereign—a reign of one the servant of the Father, and not that of one unto whom the

Father hath given "all judgment," and under whom "he hath put all things," himself excepted, "which did put all things under him," so that the Son "is Lord of all." "Over all, God blessed forever." The Church has failed to see in the ascription of all power in heaven and in earth to the Son, the lapse of the mediatorship in the assumption of absolute authority. Let the reader carefully notice John v. 22, 23; 1st Corin. xv. 27, 28; Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11; and Rev. i. 8, and he will see that the mediatorship of the Christ gave place to the absolute sovereignty of the Son of God at the regal advent; and he will also perceive from other parts of Scripture, as Luke xxi, 31, and Heb. i, 6, where in the first, the kingdom is said to be nigh at hand when Jerusalem was captured by the Romans and her temple destroyed, and in the second where the Son is presented as an object of worship when God "again hath introduced the first begotten into the world," that the Son began his rule over the final age when the Levitical economy finally passed away. His throne resting on a *wholly perfected atonement*. Himself as "Over all, God blessed forever." His sceptre ever extended to the world of sinners, and each one touching it in repentance and faith, find in that comprehensive yet simple act, the remission of sin, and "an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." All controversy forever silenced concerning the Deity of the Son of God, for he is "over all," and respecting the nature of the atonement for it is simply and wholly perfect. These two fundamental doctrines forever removed from the field of controversy, because comprised in the person and rule of the Priest-King, in submission *to whom is life*, and in rejection *of whom is death*.

The universal Church has held concerning the reign of the Son, *more* than Scripture teaches. It has placed the regal advent, the resurrection and the judgment at the end of time, of which end of time there is not in Scripture the remotest hint in its relation to these events. With all deference to others, I must say, that after a patient and thorough examination of Scripture, I have found only one allusion to the end of time, and it in 1st Corin. xv. 24, but the reference there is not to the regal advent, but to the end of the reign—to the giving up of the kingdom to the Father, "*when* he shall have put down all rule and all authority and

power." The advent is at the beginning of the reign. Then follows a work of thousands of years, for as the Apostle adds, "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Then the end, and reasonably the end of time, "*when* he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father ;" "*when* he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power," and then also the reign of the Son as "over all, God blessed for ever," comes to an end ; for we read in verse 28, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

"Then the end" ΕΙΤΑ ΤΟ ΤΕΛΟΣ 1st Cor. xv. 24, and this is the only reference to the end of time I have found in Scripture. There are many such phrases as, "the end of the days," "the last day," "the end of the world," "the end of all things is at hand." "the ends of the world," "these last days." I ask the reader not to be misled by the verbiage, but to interpret the phrases in their relation to the context, and in harmony to all else in Scripture. The end of time had not come eighteen centuries ago ; yet Peter at Pentecost spoke of "the last days" as present or near. Paul in 1st Corin. x. 2 says, "they are written for *our* admonition, *upon whom* the ends of the world are come." In Heb. i. 2, we read, "Hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by his Son," and in ix. 26, "But now once in *the end of the world*, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and in 1st Peter iv. 7, "But the end of all things is at hand, be *ye therefore* sober and watch unto prayer."—all these passages and others having reference to the end of the Mosaic age, and that as introductory to the reign or age of the Son, to continue to the end of time.

But the resurrection is at the regal advent, at the coming of the Son to begin his reign. In 1st Corin. xv. 23, we read, "But every man in his own order (or band) Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Not at the close of the reign is the resurrection of those that are Christ's, but at his coming to reign—the coming in glory as stated by Jesus in Matt. xvi. 27-28, to be in the *life time* of some he addressed. In xxiv. 34, before the then living generation passed away. Paul believed this.

In 1st Corin. xvi. 22 he says, "*Maran atha*," the Lord cometh or is coming. In Phil. iv. 5, "The Lord is at hand." In Heb. x. 37, "For yet a little while," (*μικρον οσον οσον* a very little while. To give intensity to what he says he repeats *οσον*. In Liddel & Scott's classical lexicon we read, "*οσον, οσον*, only just, the least bit,") "and he that is coming will come and shall not tarry."

James says, "Be patient therefore brethren unto the coming of the Lord." "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "The Judge standeth before the door."

Peter in many parts of his epistles speaks of "the appearing" and "the revelation" of the Lord Jesus, in a way that precludes the thought of the end of time as the season. The first chapter of his first epistle is crowded with such statements, and with reflections on them. In chap. iv. 5th verse, we read, "who shall give account to him that is ready (*ετοιμως εχοντι* held in readiness) to judge the quick and the dead." He adds, "But the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer," thus repeating the cautions of Christ in Luke xxi. 34 to the end, with reference to his second and regal coming.

John said of *his day*, "Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard (from Christ) that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists, whereby we know it is the last time." Full of confidence in the near coming in glory of his Lord, and our gathering together with him, he says, "And now little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." He adds to enforce the exhortation, "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." And then as the grand motive to righteousness, he speaks of the love of the Father, as the origin of divine sonship, that love manifested in the whole work of Christ, but to be more illustriously displayed, when he shall appear in regal glory, for then shall be the manifestation of the sons of God, Rom. viii. 19. In view of this as then near at hand, the enraptured apostle says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God,

and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

The scintillations from Messianic prophecy, focalized by Him whose testimony is the spirit of prophecy, flooded the New Testament with the light of the day of Messiah's glory. Hence the difference in the older and in the later divine records. The one, having as its seal "the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire," and enshrouded in "blackness and darkness and tempest." The other, the signet of "Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," where are "an innumerable company of angels," "the general assembly and church of the first born" and "the spirits of just men made perfect." They were severally representative of "the law of a carnal commandment," and of "the power of an endless life—of "the law which made nothing perfect," and of the "better hope by the which we draw nigh unto God." Representative also of "the ministration of condemnation," about to be shaken and removed, "that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." The one, styled "things that are made," Heb. xii, 27. Adumbrative and symbolical things—material, as representing the spiritual—the old heavens and earth. The other "a kingdom which cannot be moved." All those "things which are made" fulfilled the divine design, and in A. D. 70 gave place to the spiritual and immovable kingdom which came not with observation, and whose events of resurrection and judgment and continuous life giving action, were not patent to the senses of men, nor were heard in the din of a busy and sensual world.

It needed but a word from the omnipotent King to awaken all the righteous dead to everlasting life. "He spake and it was done." Not a ripple on the great sea of earthly life indicated the wondrous transformation. The world moved on as before, when the kingdom which came without observation received into itself all the excellence of former times. The world moved on as before, when the established kingdom, as "the ministration of the spirit" testified to death as made ineffectual to hold him who liveth and believeth in Christ. The apathy and unbelief of the

world infected the church. She walked by sight and not by faith. The words of the Lord Jesus, John vi, 51 and 58, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever." "Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever"—words which revealed the consummation of all gospel blessings, in eternal life immediately after death to all the faithful in the final age, were not apprehended in their true sense because of the prevailing unbelief. The Church after the regal advent, like many of the disciples who had heard these words from the lips of Christ, said, "this is an hard saying, who can hear it."

The Church invited the entrance of Judaism and of Platonism. The one, with its last day regal advent and resurrection and judgment, *projected* to the end of time, and the other, with its soul-life after death. A mottled Christianity has signalized the centuries since, and a Babel of different languages and hostile sects. Although wounded in the house of her friends, Christianity reveals her divine mission in her survival to the present. She lives in her human bands, yet longs to be disenthralled. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth" for her emancipation. It will come, *when* the Church universal turns from the testimonies of men to the law and to the testimony of God, and sees there the spirituality of the Kingdom of God, in the difference in the former, and in the final dispensations—the reign of death in the one, and the reign of life in the other—the earthly deputies ruling in the one, and the Messiah as God over all and blessed forever, ruling over the other. Then, the spiritual nature of the final age will be seen, and the eye of faith resolve all its acts. Then, the recognition of the resurrection at the regal advent, and of the continuous gift of eternal life in the final age to the faithful, as they pass through the valley of *the shadow of death*, and of the presence of the Son of God as sovereign and reigning King, and of Holy Scripture as alone the law of his reign, will lift Christianity above the inventions of men, will rebuke the schisms of the past and the present, will reveal the righteousness of the kingdom of God, and will thus prepare the way for the purification and unity of Chris

tendom, and the extension of the gospel over all the earth.

If the reader has been grievously surprised by the leading doctrine in this discourse, viz, that at the regal advent in A. D. 70, all the righteous dead of former times were raised and glorified, and entered the kingdom of God as its nucleus, to which is added *continuously* the faithful of all future times to the end, will he permit me to say, that my surprise was as great as his, when in my quiet study, there searching the Scriptures in obedience to the command of the one and only Teacher, the sublime truth flashed over, and into my mind. I had never read of it in any work of man, nor heard of it from the lips of any man. It may have engaged the attention of others. It may have been the subject of many books. If so, I must confess my ignorance, and also express wonder, that this light, which for me has done so much to harmonize and illustrate Scripture, should have been hidden under a bushel. When I came to the knowledge of this truth, the ever memorable words of Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, uttered when they were leaving the land of their nativity, to go to a strange country, as Abraham of old, not knowing whither they went, "God hath yet more truth and light to break forth from his Holy Word," came with all their force to my mind.

The resurrection and the regal coming are so associated in Scripture, that to determine the time of the latter, gives that of the other. Let the reader note Matt. x. 23, xvi. 27-28, xxiv. 34-35, and the corresponding places in Mark and Luke, and from these and other words of Christ, which plainly show the nearness of the coming in glory, he will from the inspiration gathered from the words of the Lord of the prophets, be prepared to begin a review of Messianic prophecy, and of the writings of the Apostles. If the reading of this discourse should lead any thus to search the Scriptures, little more need be said. Let the appeal be "to the law and to the testimony," that our faith may "not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." If, as Robinson said, "God hath yet more truth and light to break forth," let us firmly believe that they can only come "from his Holy Word."

May we not expect more truth and light to break forth from God's Holy Word? to purify faith, to resolve and realize the

righteousness of the kingdom of God, to gather in one the people of God now scattered abroad, and all to the evangelization of the heathen world. Should we not expect this additional truth and light in this century? which beyond all others is signalized by the missionary spirit, and by corresponding efforts for the diffusion of the Gospel. When, if not now, should we be praying, and looking, for more truth and light to break forth from God's Holy Word? Christendom is filled with numerous and hostile sects. The earnest endeavours in this missionary century, are tending to fill the heathen nations with the same result of warring sects. Human names and party symbols, hide the ineffable name "which is above every name," and Churches of Cranmer, and Calvin, and Wesley, and a host of others, decorated with human names, and ecclesiastical and doctrinal and ritual titles, proclaim that the kingdom of God is not yet come.

Post-millennarianism projects the kingdom of God to the end of time. Pre-millennarianism pronounces all the past of Christianity in the aggregate a failure. Ritualism, or Sacramentarianism is flooding Protestant Christendom, and with her christianized Judaism is labouring for the return of mediæval superstition, and the prostration of the mind at the feet of so-called priests, of whom New Testament Christianity knows nothing. Infidelity, reinvigorated by the revival of physical science, is not as in the last century confining her assaults to the Bible as a divine revelation, but is aiming to overthrow that which is the only basis of any religion, namely, the existence of a personal God. All these combined, are producing an eclipse of faith, and a crisis in the history of Christianity, which imperatively demands a review of Scripture concerning its doctrines, but more especially a review of its revelations respecting the kingdom of God, and its King as whether now reigning in the plenitude of Deity over the final age, or as has hitherto been believed, as yet Mediator and Intercessor, and as such subordinate to the Father. The Christian world may yet be convinced, that if the doctrine of the *absolute* authority of the Son as God over all, is still to be superseded by the prevailing view of Him as Mediator and Intercessor, and as still filling those offices, which proclaim *an unfinished atonement*, that it beats the air in repelling an overspreading ritualism, and that

its efforts for the unity of the whole Christian brotherhood are vain. It will yet see, that the Son as now reigning over the final age, and by the Word as the law of his reign, gives the Divine reason for unity, and that He reigning in the fullness of Deity proclaims *an accomplished atonement*, and so doing, earthly ritualism has no place in spiritual Christianity.

But what of Churchianity? that great forest of trees planted by the art and device of men, which for many centuries has taken the place of *the* tree "which the Lord hath planted," "whose branches were to cover the whole earth, that under them *the whole Israel of God* should find shelter?" What of the future of the so-called visible church of Christ? if its doctrines demand such reconstruction as is implied in the theory of the regal advent, and the resurrection, as of the past now presented? I have not in these pages fully considered these questions. Greater and more absorbing questions have justly claimed precedence. The Word of God towers above all Churches. Its true sense concerning the Kingdom of God, is more to be desired, than the concentrated essence of all theologies. I have chosen to seek the solution of truth concerning the Kingdom of God, at the fountain head of knowledge, without *much regard* to what may be found in its distant and polluted rivulets; and I am persuaded, that in the confusion of present times, and the threatening chaos of the future, the Israel of God everywhere, will make the same choice, and find *in the Word alone*, the resolution of all truth.

We are apt to be too much concerned about the future of the various confederations called Churches, and their theological formulas. We might moderate our fears, and call into exercise a different feeling as we look at checkered Christendom, and then at the ideal of the Christian Church presented in the New Testament. The antithesis is so complete, that serious concern for the preservation of what now is, may reasonably be lessened if not extinguished. Let us use existing agencies if conscience is not infringed thereby, but let us not in view of what Scripture teaches, concerning the unity of all believers in Christ, suppose that present arrangements are divine, and therefore to endure to the end. God *must* have "yet more truth and light to break forth

from his Holy Word." The ecclesiastical and doctrinal condition of Christendom is so wide apart from that of apostolic times, and the teaching of Scripture; and the righteousness manifest, is so little beyond that of the Scribes and Pharisees, as to warrant the inference, that Christianity is yet in the season of her youth, and that her growth to *maturity* may fill up five times the number of the centuries she has yet counted.

Why should we not look to a glorious consummation of the reign of the Son of God? The Patriarchal dispensation, ended in an overspreading of idolatry and wickedness. The Mosaic, expired in the desolation of Jerusalem, the burning of the temple, and the scattering of an apostate people—in scenes of horror, likened by our Lord to the catastrophes that overwhelmed the world at the deluge, and Sodom and Gomorrah. The end of the Kingdom of God, because it is the reign of God—of the God-man who hath all power in heaven and on earth, will not, cannot be as that of the others. It will be a glorious consummation, preceded by ages of light and peace and joy, that passeth all present understanding. Instead of time expiring with the inconceivably dreadful judgment day, said to be "the day for which all other days were made," whose terrors depicted in the famous hymn of the middle ages, called the *Dies iræ*, have sent anguish and dismay into the minds of saint and sinner; the end when the Son "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father," and the transition into eternity will be silent and unnoticable, as the perfect resemblance gives place to its perfect original. It will be an evolution without a jar, because redemption has completed its work, and earth is as heaven. This is the end, because it will be "when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power," and therefore, when all evil has been wholly extirpated and removed.

The regal advent and the resurrection of the past, gives a brightly suggestive view of the Kingdom of God's dear Son. It illustrates the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion, on joint participation of the Holy Ghost. It places the Son where Scripture ever teaches as "God over all," "the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the first and the last," "the Almighty."

It reveals the Son as "King of the ages." The inferior dispensations pouring all their wealth and excellence into his, the last age. It shows his age as an age of life. It illustrates his words, "he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." In an accomplished atonement, and the mediatorship merged in the sovereign reign of the Son, it sounds the knell of all forms of ritualism in Christendom, and manifests the spirituality of the means and ends in the Kingdom of God. It *demand*s the unity of all who believe in the Son of God, and receive Holy Scripture as the law of his reign, and the only rule of faith and practice. It presents Denominationalism as the foe to unity, and free Biblical interpretation as a Divine law in all churches of the saints. It says, "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth : in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one." "There shall be one fold and one shepherd," "and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." It enforces the exhortation of the evangelical prophet which should make itself felt in the wide and diversified realm of Denominationalism. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else."

Three objections, which may be called extra-scriptural, yet worthy of careful notice, face the regal advent and the resurrection as of the past. Two of them have in these pages received some attention. On the first, which is based on the invisibility of the supernatural events, I would refer to the canon to be used for the definition of prophetic symbolism, on the ninth page, and to the words of St. Paul, "we walk by faith, not by sight," "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." We look by the eye of faith, and not by the bodily eye. On this objection so formidable to many I need say nothing further. The statements of St. Paul are axioms which like those in Euclid and on which Mathematical science rests, must be received and used in the interpretation of the Bible which is largely permeated with the supernatural.

On the second, viz : that the regal advent and the resurrection as of the past, traverses the deliverances of the universal Church on these doctrines, not much more need be said, than to call attention to the supreme authority of Scripture. It was by obedience

to this higher law that Luther revived the true doctrine of justification by faith, which was denounced by the Romish Church as a novelty. But it was as an axe laid at the root of the great tree of sacerdotalism. It did not merely antagonize the doctrine of justification as then held, and dating back for over twelve centuries, but it shook the fabric of church deliverances, and removed many doctrines then considered essential to human salvation. In view of the justification of the sinner by faith in Christ only, there remained no place for the mediating and absolving priest, or the atoning sacrifice of the Mass, or purgatory, or prayers for the dead, or the worship of Mary and the Saints, or for the ritualism which for twelve centuries or more had given the visible expression of Christian doctrine. Only three centuries have elapsed since Christendom was shaken to its base, and chiefly by the resurrection to life of a doctrine which had been smothered by ritualism and sacerdotalism. Many then said that Christianity was overthrown. We now say that excrescences were removed, and Christianity was strengthened. Many may say, if the regal advent and the resurrection as of the past displace the present views, that Christianity will be seriously injured. What if the views now presented are revived divine truths, and needed to the perfection of the doctrine of justification by faith? What if the words of the prophet, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," demand a looking to the reigning King who was Priest, but now is the Priest-King? Christianity seriously injured! She will be largely illustrated. Justification by faith injured! The doctrine will be fully developed. It now suffers by the almost exclusive reference to the priestly Christ. It will be perfected as faith is extended to embrace *also* the reigning and sovereign Son of God.

The third objection to the regal advent and the resurrection as of the past, has not yet been noticed in these pages, but to my own mind it has been for some years, and until I was led to consider these events as of the past, the most formidable objection of the three. Before, it was not easy to see that the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple, and the removal of the whole Mosaic system, could be *in themselves* matters of great concern to Christians at Rome and Corinth and Thessalonica and Phillipi. The

pertinency of the Saviour's words to those in Judea could be readily understood, but not their application to his followers in other countries, nor the references in the epistles to those in other parts. It is true that the Jews were virulent persecutors, and that their national ruin and dispersion removed a hindrance to the progress of Christianity, but not so much so as to warrant the language used in the New Testament. The apostle James and a considerable number of disciples formed the Church at Jerusalem nearly up to the time of the destruction of the city, which shows that the enmity of the Jews was restrained by the Roman power—by that power which a little before A. D., 70 and in subsequent years far exceeded the Jews in desolating the Church of God. How to find a way out of this difficulty perplexed my mind as it has the minds of others.

It was only when I saw the regal advent and the resurrection, as synchronous with the destruction of Jerusalem and the final removal of the Levitical rites at A. D., 70, and the establishment then of the Kingdom of God as a dispensation of life, that the application of the prophecies of Christ and the apostles to Christians on the whole earth, seemed clear and appropriate. The difficulty before so perplexing then vanished. The crisis in A. D., 70 was a time of fear and hope to the Christians at Rome, as it was to those in Judea. The judgment rested on Judea, but the redemption signified in the Saviour's words, Luke xxi. 28, "And when these things begin to come to pass, *then* look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh," affected all the faithful to the ends of the earth. It comprised the abolition of *Hades* and death, the resurrection to everlasting life of all the faithful of the past, and the beginning of an age of life, in which only the shadow of the last enemy death, would remain. The season was the grand crisis of all times, significant of the passing away of the reign of death, and of grace beginning to "reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Guided by such a view the difficulty noticed vanished, but on the commonly received view of the predictions of Christ and the apostles as having their fulfilment, first in the desolation of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, and then after a lapse of thousands of years at the end of time, the difficulty is perplexing if not insuperable.

Before the general tenor and the harmonious adjustment of Scripture, the three objections fade away. Especially is it so, as the words of Christ in Matt. xxiv. 29 to 36 are carefully studied. There we see predicted in "the tribulation of *these* days" the desolation of Jerusalem and the end of the temple. There is an immediate sequence, the final end of the Mosaic system civil and ecclesiastical, indicated by the words *Ευθως δε μετὰ*—words, which no critical skill can change the rendering—"immediately after." There are figures employed, similar to those used by the prophets concerning the end of the Empires of Babylon and Egypt. The sun darkened. The moon not giving her light. The stars falling from the heavens, and the powers of the heavens shaken. All these symbols representing the end of Judaism, and all together, "the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory." Another connected sequence, the resurrection of all the righteous dead,—“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” As we read these words, those of Paul, 2nd Thess. ii. 1, flash on the mind, “Now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.” Then the parable of the fig tree, “When his branch is yet tender, and putting forth leaves ye know that *summer* is nigh.” Then its explanation, “So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it (summer) is near, even at the doors.” *The winter of death almost gone, and the summer of life almost come.* What precision marks the Saviour’s following words: “Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till *all* these things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Criticism has done its utmost to make *ἡ γενεὰ αὐτῆς*—“this generation” mean this race or nation, but without avail. Expositors in despair have advocated a double sense with a like result. In Matt. xxiv. Mark xiii. and Luke xxi. the judgment on Jerusalem, the regal advent, the resurrection and the judgment, are placed as synchronous events. Jesus said, Matt. xviii. 16, “in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” There are here not only two, but three witnesses, testifying to the end of the reign of death, and to the beginning of the reign of life at the second and regal advent.

Can we wonder that the judgment on Jerusalem, it being the

visible sign of such stupendous events as the regal advent, the resurrection and the judgment, should have been to Christians in Apostolic times, in all parts of the world, a subject of surpassing interest, and that not only James at Jerusalem, but Paul at Thessalonica and Corinth and Rome, and Peter at Babylon, whether that was in Chaldea, or Egypt, or Rome, should have made it such a special and all absorbing topic? Search as we will for reasons, only one appears conclusive, and it only of all others is sustained by the concurrent testimony of Scripture. The old heavens and earth were about to pass away, and the new heavens and earth—the reign of the God-man was about to appear. The reign of death was nearly ended, and the reign of life was about to begin.

The magnificent predictions of Isaiah and Hosea were about to be accomplished by the advent of the Life-giver, and on the holy hill of Zion. Isaiah xxv. 6 to 11, “And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation: For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.” Hosea xiii. 14. “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; (*sheol*) I will redeem them from death; O death I will be thy plagues, O grave, (*sheol*) I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.”

What remains but to send far and near the joyful tidings so long delayed, and in this nineteenth century of the age of redemption, reiterate the brilliant predictions of the Psalmist, long since accomplished. “Yet have I set my King on my holy hill of Zion.” “For the kingdom is the Lord’s and he is the governor among the nations.” “All the ends of the world *shall remember*

and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for thou shalt judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon earth." "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness : fear before him all the earth. Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth : the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved : he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad ; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the fields be joyful, and all that is therein : then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice. Before the Lord, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth ; he shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth."

The regal advent is of the past. Scripture luminously declares it. Its testimony concerning the regal advent embraces the resurrection as also of the past. This was to be when Michael the great prince should stand up in regal majesty, at "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time, and *at that time* thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." Dan. xii. 1 to 4. Christ, in Matt. xxiv. 21, says of *this* time of trouble, as to be fulfilled at the desolation of Jerusalem, "for then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." He, in verse 30, announces his regal advent, and in the verse following, the resurrection and the gathering together of "the elect, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." In Mark xiii. 27, we read, "from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." In Daniel xii. 7 is a prophecy, the significance of which has not yet been perceived by many, yet its evident import confines the completion of Daniel's prophecies, at least of those in the twelfth chapter, to the events of A. D. 70. Let the reader seriously ponder it. "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto

heaven, and swear by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half, *and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.*" Let this prophecy be placed beside that of Christ's in Luke xxi. 24, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, *and shall be led away captive into all nations*, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ;" and the resurrection of the faithful dead at the regal advent at A. D. 70, announced by Daniel, authenticated by Christ, and confirmed by Apostolic testimony, has all the evidence needed to make it "worthy of all acceptance."

Some eminent writers have in past times advocated the doctrine of the regal advent as of A. D. 70. Many divines have verbally, or tacitly, admitted the force of the evidence ; but none so far as I know, have written on its relations to the resurrection, the judgment, and the final age, over which the Son of God reigns in the fulness of the Godhead. They must have in some measure perceived these relations, but may have feared the wrath of universal Christendom, and in the publication of their views regarding the regal advent, left the consideration of its relations to a more convenient season. With charity towards all, yet as I understand Scripture, it is impossible for me to give any other reason for their inattention to the bearings of the doctrine of the regal advent as of A. D. 70, on the resurrection, the judgment, and the kingdom of the final age.

I will now give a few extracts from "The Apocalypse fulfilled, in the consummation of the Mosaic economy, and the coming of the Son of Man," by the Rev. P. S. Dezprez, B. D., Curate of Emmanuel, Camberwell, London,—in the words of a reviewer in the Journal of Sacred Literature, January, 1862, "A work of extraordinary merit, the most original, thorough, and eloquent exposition of the Apocalypse, in this or any other language." Mr. Dezprez says of the Apocalypse, "the coming of Christ, the gathering of the elect, and the desolation of the once favored people, is a theme worthy of its magnificent descriptions. Nothing can be more evident, than that our Lord's disciples implicitly believed the declarations which He had made, respecting his

advent during the lifetime of their then existing generation. They never dreamed of thousands of years intervening between his first and second coming. * * * Never spoke of this coming in connection with the return of the Jews to their own land * * or of a personal and visible reign of Christ on earth, but with the destruction of the Jewish people." "It is a thoroughly ascertained and most deplorable reality, that no small portion of our fellow Christians are taking it for granted, that in giving ear to visionary conjectures respecting a personal reign of Christ on earth, and the splendours of a millennial paradise—they are being instructed in the things which belong to their everlasting peace." "*A more momentous subject than the true character of the second coming does not exist in the whole range of theology.* If the views here advanced are true, the belief in an advent yet to take place must be erroneous; if false, they ought to be refuted, and their incompatibility with the general tenor of God's holy word demonstrated. If true, the views advocated *ought not to be held in silence*; if false, no punishment is too great for so daring an innovation. If Christ has come the second time, He cannot come again, and if his kingdom is now set up, it is folly to look for the establishment of another."

The same writer in the preface of a book, "The Apocalypse Fulfilled," or an answer to "Apocalyptic Sketches," by Dr. Cumming, says, "The principle upon which I have conducted this investigation is founded on that most clear, universally expressed, and Scriptural truth, that our Lord came, *as he said*, to destroy Jerusalem, and to close the dispensation. No doctrine of Christianity stands on more ample evidence, and none is capable of more complete and definite proof. The reason why it is not more generally insisted upon, is, that we are accustomed to look at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the close of the Jewish dispensation, in the same light as the destruction of any other city or people. This is a false point of view. That awful consummation was the grandest event, both in its nature and consequences which has rolled along the stream of time. It was the breaking up, not of a dynasty, but of a dispensation, not of a city and nation, but of a religion—a religion established by God himself, and which for two thousand years was the only religion vouchsafed to man."

“As a sequence to this indisputable fact follows the gathering of the elect at the same period. The two events are inseparably connected together in Holy Scripture. If our Lord came, *as he said*, before that generation passed away—if he came, *as he said*, before his disciples had gone through the cities of Israel, and if some who heard his words did not taste of death till they saw the ‘Son of Man coming in his Kingdom’—then he also gathered his elect at the same time. There is no alternative ; this must either be true, or the Bible must be false. That he did so come is proved to a demonstration by his effecting the objects for which he came ; that he also gathered his elect (although the subject is necessarily incapable of the same kind of proof) is the natural consequence, and the deducible corollary from the coming of the Son of Man.”

In an article furnished by Mr. Dezprez in the July number, 1856, of the “Journal of Sacred Literature” on the Neronian date of the Apocalypse, he says, “That the coming of Christ took place at the destruction of Jerusalem,” will require more consideration. And here I am glad to shelter myself under the authority of the late Prof. Lee, who says in a letter to a friend, ‘I am so much overwhelmed with the crowd of matter that I hardly know on which first to seize. It is truly a noble and glorious subject. How the church should have lost sight of it in this its simplicity, I am at a loss to conceive, particularly as it is quite certain that in early times this was the only view entertained.’ Mr. Dezprez adds, “I unhesitatingly affirm that no doctrine of Christianity stands on a more complete and magnificent proof than can be produced for the time of the second coming of the Lord. Possibly had the terms ‘the last days’—the last days of the Mosaic economy, ‘the end of the world’ æon—the close of the Jewish dispensation, ‘the earth’—the land of Judea, *been rightly translated* and understood, there would have been fewer differences among Christians.” He adds in another place, “It will be well to state that our Lord’s coming is only once mentioned in Scripture *as the second advent* (Heb. ix., 28) but since it *is* so mentioned, there can be no *third* coming to judgment distinct from his coming in his kingdom.”

As I was about finishing the MS. for this publication, and the preface and much else were printed, my attention was drawn by a

friend to Mr. Dezprez's writings, and especially to what he says of the gathering of the elect at the regal advent. His language is precise and intelligible. He says, "then he also gathered his elect at the same time. There is no alternative; this must either be true, or the Bible must be false. That he did so come is proved to a demonstration by his effecting the objects (those in the material sphere) for which he came: that he also gathered his elect (although the subject is necessarily incapable of *the same kind of proof*) is the natural consequence, and the deducible corollary from the coming of the Son of Man." I rejoice that Mr. Dezprez more than twenty years ago was at least on the same line of thought touching the resurrection which is given in these pages. There are no doubt many instances of like kind. May they be multiplied, that the explication of the Word of God on this important doctrine may be seen to be the work of many, and so that to the furtherance of truth the probable sneer may be checked, "it is only *your* work."

Professor Lee said of the regal advent as of A. D. 70. "How the Church should have lost sight of it in this its simplicity I am at a loss to conceive, particularly *as it is quite certain that in early times this was the only view entertained.*" This remark of one so distinguished as a scholar and divine, throws no light on the cause of the negligence of the church. He only here gives what seemed to him a fact, and leaves to others the discovery of its cause. Mr. Dezprez alludes to mistranslations of certain words in the authorized version, as at least one of the reasons of the inattention of the church, which is also a fact, concerning which the eminent and learned divines after the Reformation, when the Bible had become an open book, have shown no haste to discover and amend. There is however a cause which is the chief of all, in that none of the Churches of ancient or modern times, have made any *special and easily applied provision* for the reception of any more truth and light which God may cause "to break forth from his Holy Word." The *semper eadem* of the Church of Rome, if not formally avowed by the Protestant Churches, is by them substantially held, and not in a way quite consonant with their avowed principles of freedom and progression, nor with the language they use deprecatory of the Jesuitism of the Romish Church. Their theological formulas, and these rigidly enforced on the teaching

ministry, place the Protestant Churches on the same ground as that on which the Church of Rome stood at the Reformation, and alike unfriendly to any change of doctrine, even if required for a greater conformity to Scripture. And this arises not so much from an absolute unwillingness to receive the whole truth of God, as from the mechanical form and operation of the Church systems, which for their justification seemingly must ever rest on the merits of the accepted faith, and for their growth and furtherance must ever lean on it without very special concern as to its quality. Hence a very gross mistake in the fourth—the creed-making century, concerning the regal advent, the resurrection and the judgment, has not been rectified since; and even in this nineteenth century, any attempt to do so, to be in any way successful, is likely to meet with such opposition, as to cause a commotion not less, and perhaps much greater than that in the time of Luther.

Christendom has been for long seasons either characterized by a frigid quietness, or at rare and distant intervals lashed into fury by sudden and violent efforts at reformation in doctrine, and so as to shake it to its base. The evident cause is, that the churches ancient and modern, did not make *any special and easily applied provision* for the reception of *any more* truth and light out of God's Holy Word. In short, the means to reformation are not at hand when knowledge is being increased, and any attempt at reformation places the movers under the charge of rebellion against the constituted authorities, and so liable to be treated as rebels. An effectual barrier lies in the way to the union of ministers friendly to reformation, and to concentration of effort. The weak draw back. Those stronger, appalled at the obnoxious position the movement will place them in, and at the loss of position and emolument become faint and weary in well-doing, and only one here and there who fear God more than they do man, are firm, and for the sake of truth take joyfully the spoiling of their goods. As things have been and are in the Churches, it does seem that the trial of the faith of ministers when they become moved to attempt the reformation of doctrinal error, is more than *they* can bear. Let us not blame the men. Let us rather blame the church-systems which have not made any special and *easily applied* provision for the reception of *any more* truth and light which may break forth out of God's Holy Word. The

ministers of all the churches will as a class compare favourably with the like number of men in any profession or business. The Christian people will greatly err if they apply the evil noticed to them. Where the ministers fail in duty the onus lies chiefly if not wholly on the church-systems, which in their recorded principles are not framed according to the letter and the spirit of the New Testament. It avails little to say, that in Protestant Churches the creed is subject to revision and amendment, as I am not considering things in the abstract, but in the concrete. Even in the Church of Rome, the creed admits of increase and development, and there is not in Protestant Churches in the abstract any hindrance to its reformation, but in the concrete the hindrance is nearly insuperable, and to reformers may involve ecclesiastical death, and so, because no special and easily applied provision has been made for the reception of more truth and light which may break forth from God's Holy Word.

It may be said that it is easier to point out evils than it is to show a way to their correction. It may be therefore very pertinently asked, "If you from Scripture can present a remedy for the consideration of the Christian people, it is your duty to do so." In so doing I would say, that I have no controversy with the mere frame works of particular Churches. I am pleading on a question of liberty so as to secure the freedom of the ministry in all the Churches, and that, in order to the free interpretation of Scripture by each minister, undisturbed by the pains and penalties now existing. The form of the Church may be important, but the freedom of the ministry in declaring the whole counsel of God is vastly more important. Puritan although I am to the core, I am not a bigot concerning the form of the Church. I would rather plead for that, which if gained would in time purify the doctrinal and *then* the ecclesiastical. In the New Testament, there is little said of the form of the Church, but there is there much said, and more to be reasonably implied, concerning two things, and these apart from the mere frame work of the Church are the vital forces in any and all Churches of Christ. They are, faith in the Son of God as the Priest-King and as "over all, God blessed for ever," and the "continuing" steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine," which now to us means, *abiding in their recorded teachings*. These two principles should be sacred and inviolable in every Church of

Christ. By faith in the first, we are saved, and by continued obedience in both, we stand, and have communion with the Holy Catholic Church. The whole Israel of God can be united on these fundamental principles, without reference to the various Church frame works now existing, or to differing views in the interpretation of Scripture, outside of the two fundamental principles noticed. Where these two principles are received there is salvation, and as a necessary consequence communion. For these ends they rule out every thing else, placing all else as debateable subjects, not *immediately* necessary to salvation and communion—subjects for free discussion and friendly counsel and exhortation. They place the ministry directly responsible to Christ the reigning King, and to his Word as the only law of his reign. If they revolutionize all existing Churches, the fault, if any, is in them. Enough, that they sweep away all humanly constructed creeds *as* terms of salvation and communion; that they liberate the teaching ministry from bondage to authoritative theological formulas; that they introduce the divine way to unity, and that they provide *a divinely special and easily applied way* for the reception of more truth and light which may break forth out of God's Holy Word.

Thus briefly I have answered the very pertinent question before put. If in any way that involves a radical reformation of existing Churches, and therefore inconvenient and displeasing to many, all that I need add, is to refer such to the words of Christ, Matt. xvi. 18, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." The "rock" must either mean Peter or his confession. If the latter is meant, and concerning that there need be little doubt, we see in its language, that, and only that, which guided and defined all the acts of the apostles in the founding and upbuilding of the Church of Christ. In the records of apostolic times there is observable nothing that contravenes or adds to the divine basis. The unity of the Church was secured by the belief of the heart, represented in the words "thou art;" in Jesus as the Christ—the suffering atoning and anointed one of the Father, "the living God;" and in the Son of God declared to be such "with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"—Rom. i. 4; and yet to be more abundantly declared as such, at the regal advent, by his visible judgments on Jerusalem and on the Levitical dispensation; and to the eye of faith, by the acts of his sovereign

power as the Life-giver, in raising to everlasting life all the faithful of the past, and continuously all the faithful, to the end of time, thus verifying his words, "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man"—John v. 26-27.

In view of the ideal of the Church of Christ here given, and of the so-called churches of Christ for at least fifteen centuries in the past, we need not greatly wonder at the true doctrine of justification being only revealed in the sixteenth century, nor at the view of the regal advent and the resurrection as of the past now presented in this the nineteenth century. We might marvel with exceeding amazement at *such late developments*, could we believe that the church up to the Reformation had rested *only* on the supremacy of the Son of God, and on Holy Scripture; or even that since then the churches were and are *on the Divine basis solely*. But such a view cannot be maintained. At the Reformation we cast off the Pope, and professed to abjure all human authority, yet in fact we only renounced one form of human authority and held to many others. Many churches have been founded on particular expositions of Scripture. The authority of a noted man, or that of a number of men has been deemed sufficient to create a church of Christ!! Here and there, and at many times in the last three centuries has the cry been heard *from men*, "On this rock (our views concerning the teaching of Scripture) we will build *our* church," and they did build *our* church. What one or more did, others of course claimed to do, and so the anti-Christian work has gone on to the dividing and the scattering of the Israel of God; and to what is perhaps worse, to the enthronement of a principle of human authority in the creation and upbuilding of societies called by their founders and adherents churches of Christ, involving in them necessarily, not the preaching of the whole counsel of God to the people, but its publication *as it accords* with the accepted creed of each party.

In view of such facts we need not be amazed at any late development of Divine truth. We should rather marvel and with exceeding amazement, that for fifteen centuries or more, the words of Christ concerning that on which *He* would build *His* Church have not been received as inviolable—not to be diminished nor

added unto ; and that any man however noted, or any number of men, should have dared to presume, that either he, or they, by their expositions of Scripture, could *on them* found churches of Christ, or *by them* determine the conditions of salvation and communion.

A look of pity and astonishment, like that which greeted the revelation of the doctrine of justification by faith, in the sixteenth century, may rest on what is here presented concerning the regal advent and the resurrection as of the past ; but might it not be wiser to allow *that look* to rest on the churches of Christendom, and on their standards, in which *no special and easily applied* provision is to be found, for the reception of any more truth and light, which God may cause to break forth out of his Holy Word.

That which should engage the attention of the Christian people, is not so much the right or the wrong in the interpretation of Scripture, by this one or the other, as whether the churches have in use the right method for the attainment of that which Paul calls "the unity of the faith," which means a final result in the knowledge of the meaning of Scripture. Everywhere are people chiefly concerned for the recognition of a favorite creed, established in a particular Church. To this they are led by the Church either making it a condition of salvation and communion, or regarding its acceptance necessary to the growth and welfare of the sect. As the Churches have enlarged the basis Christ laid, they have pledged the ministry to sectional work and issues, and the people are thoughtlessly led to seek that which does not comprehend the crucial question, which should press on every thoughtful mind, viz., What is the meaning of Scripture irrespective of church or other decisions? It seems however, enough to them to substitute another and less important question, How does Scripture sustain the creed of our Church? And in the inquiry examine Scripture from a stand-point in the creed which may determine wrong conclusions, because itself not warranted by Scripture.

The mistake is a common but a very serious one. Its gravity however, is only slightly if at all perceived, because of the denominational condition of Christendom, and also because that the ministry in each church is obligated to proclaim the whole counsel of God according to the sense of the received creed. The

people indoctrinated thereby, see only in the creed the sense of Scripture, and are insensibly incapacitated to an independent examination and understanding of the Word of God.

It is generally believed that any great change in Church creeds through a better understanding of the Scriptures is impossible, and so because of the general agreement in all evangelical Churches on all important doctrines; but what if on one subject on which they all agree, namely, that the end of time is the season of the regal advent, the resurrection and the judgment, they from that as a stand-point, look at and interpret Scripture concerning the nature of the Kingdom of God, whether as a dispensation of life, or like to those before, a dispensation of death; or at its King as whether sovereign ruler, or now and to the end of time filling offices which involve subordination to the Father? The first view is necessarily seen from the stand-point taken and advocated in these pages, while the other as inevitably comes from a view of Scripture as seen from the other stand-point. If mine is the true one, and as to whether it is such I need only refer to the many passages from Scripture given to support it, the belief that any great change in theology is not to be expected from a better understanding of Scripture must be abandoned. The time of the regal advent and the resurrection involves a crucial question, as to the real meaning of Scripture concerning the nature of the Kingdom of God, and the position of its King; the true settlement of which will have a direct and special bearing on the realization of the highest ends, in the unity, the spirituality and the righteousness of the Israel of God everywhere.

And therefore in conclusion, I ask all who esteem the true knowledge of Scripture as above all earthly good, to make this question a special study. I do so from a profound conviction, that on its true solution the highest issues depend, in the unity of all believers with each other, and in the Son of God; in the knowledge and practice of "his righteousness" which exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees; and in the coming in of the day of light and joy and peace, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." To further such ends, and not for curious enquiry, nor for sensational results, have I now given to the public in these pages "The regal advent and the resurrection, of the past."

